

Support to Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kosovo (SAEK)

in partnership with the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Governance (GovNet)



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Organisation: United Nations Development Programme

Country: Kosovo

Level of government: Local government

Sector: Public order and safety

Type: Digital, Partnerships, Public Service

Launched in: 2013

Overall development time: 3 year(s)

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

Support to Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kosovo (SAEK), through an innovative and holistic approach towards anti-corruption, aims to strengthen institutional transparency, accountability and integrity, with a particular focus on empowering citizens and access to information.

SAEK approaches anti-corruption by focusing on different levels of intervention, including the institutional, sector, and municipal/local level. In doing so, the project works directly with central and local government authorities, the judiciary, as well as civil society and the citizens themselves.

The project also addresses the differentiation between different levels of corruption. By developing activities involving high level public institutions from the judiciary and the executive branch, as well as lower level grassroots organizations and citizens, it supports the prevention, detection and investigation of both grand corruption (which involves substantial amounts of money and usually high-level officials) and petty corruption (which involves smaller sums and typically more junior officials).

It is organised around strengthening the capacities of the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Agency (KAA), strengthening the voice and capacity of citizens to demand greater accountability from public officials and service providers by using innovative ICT, web2.0 and social media technologies, and increasing the ability of the judiciary to fight corruption within and outside the judicial system.

It supports the Office of the Disciplinary Prosecutor (ODP) in strengthening its internal capacities and mechanisms for inspection, audit, and disciplinary investigations to discipline judges, lay-judges and prosecutors.

Why the innovation was developed

- Although Kosovo has made some progress in tackling corruption in the recent years, the phenomenon continues to harm the lives of thousands of people. Citizens consider corruption to be the third largest problem facing Kosovo today, after unemployment and poverty.
 - Numerous reports have highlighted that civil servants are affected by political interferences and corrupt practices, and that there is a lack of transparency in the relationships between politicians, civil servants, their families and businesses.
 - Cooperation between different authorities needs to be improved and the independence and efficiency of the judiciary needs to be strengthened. In addition, the capacity to investigate corruption remains limited.
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Objectives

Enhance public trust, Enhance transparency, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve social equity, Increase citizen engagement

- The project's objective is to strengthen institutional transparency, accountability and integrity, with a particular focus on empowering citizens and access to information.
 - The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) intends to build bridges between local government and young people by utilizing the potential of social media and web2.0 platforms, and mobile phone technologies.
 - At the local policy level, it will promote such communication tools to widen the outreach capacities of the Pristina municipality, make them more responsive to citizen needs and increase their dialogue with young women and men.
 - At the grassroots level, this project will support the use of web platforms to strengthen the voice and participation of young people in local decision-making and governance monitoring, contributing as such to more transparency and accountability.
 - This innovative and ground-breaking civil society approach to tackle corruption, allows virtually everyone in Kosovo to become a “publisher” and freely report even minor corruption cases.
 - It gives citizens the opportunity to voice concerns, share observations online and make these visible to the public, using multiple communication channels, such as social media, SMS and the web.
 - By visualizing and mapping reported corruption cases on the internet, the platform allows citizens to publicly speak out and make their unfiltered voices heard.
 - It also raises the awareness amongst citizens on the level and form of corruption occurring in Kosovo.
 - Ideally, this will allow responsible stakeholders to take collective and appropriate counter measures.
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Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, General population, Government bodies, Government staff

- General population
- Kosovo Anti-Corruption Institutions
- Central level institutions
- Municipalities
- Civil society organizations

Results

Efficiency

- To date, 1024 cases of corruption have been reported (with more than half resolved) through the online platform designed to record cases of corruption in schools and universities (www.kallxo.com). This initiative will be replicated in 30 provinces in Kosovo in 2014.
 - Because of this success, www.kallxo.com is now also increasingly being used to report inefficiencies in delivering public services at the local level.
 - To date, around 30 municipalities in Kosovo have placed an iFrame of www.kallxo.com on their official website to facilitate the municipality's interaction with the citizens.
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Service quality

Responsiveness:

- Judiciary's ability to fight corruption internally and externally is increased.
- Increased capacity of the KAA to monitor and prevent corruption in selected institutions, key service areas and municipalities.
- 3,500 citizen reports collected 300 articles and a collection of TV shows were produced based on citizen reports.

Reliability:

- There has been increased transparency and accountability in public spending through development of the platform for visualization of government revenue and spending, reaching more than 70,000 people.
- The programme has developed two online platforms through citizen-led innovation for the Municipality of Prishtinë/Priština to increase transparency in spending and public sector recruitment.

Other:

- Communication capacities of municipality of Prizren and Gjiilan/Gnjilane have been developed by introducing visual and digital communications to 100 local government representatives of which 30% were women.
 - The programme has organized ongoing workshops and trainings with about 200 young people in Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren and Gjiilan/Gnjilane to promote engagement through digital media.
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User satisfaction

- Citizens actively seek out transparency and accountability from public institutions and are better informed about local issues through social media.
- Facilitated reporting of corruption through provision of a trusted channel of communication for citizens to report corruption through kallxo.com.
- Increased engagement of youth with public institutions through involvement of 60 young men and women in designing and prototyping 15 technological solutions for the Municipality of Prishtinë/Priština.
- Facilitated communication between youth and decision-makers by introducing social media as a channel of communication between them during local elections, reaching out to 1 million Twitter accounts.

Development

Design

The programme was generated by the UNDP in collaboration with the Government of Kosovo, and fed into their anti-corruption Action Plan. SAEK activities have been designed around the KAA Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2012-2016 as well as the KAA Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2012-2016 to ensure project buy-in and highest commitment from the government to participate and facilitate the implementation of the project activities.

Testing

- SAEK's first and second components are being piloted in selected municipalities. The project is innovative and demand-driven and, as such, it should not remain as a pocket of excellence, but be implemented on a bigger scale given the requisite visibility for other organizations and donor agencies to adopt its proven solutions, technologies, methods, and processes.
 - Based on the lessons learned and accumulated during the implementation of the project and subject to the availability of funds, a broader roll-out to additional municipalities and communities could follow through a second phase. SAEK will assess its interventions through applied monitoring and evaluation throughout the three year project duration. Lessons learned and good practices will be adequately recorded to tailor follow-up interventions and subsequent up-scaling. These could include increasing the number of beneficiaries and area covered in the project, new and upgraded technology, and better process implementation.
 - As an important aspect, local demand from the communities/municipalities for scaling-up should exist and it should not be a top-down initiative. This should also be reflected in the share of community contribution out of the total co-financing that is proposed for the second phase of the project.
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Implementation

Tools used:

- The project takes advantage of the vast popularity of modern communication mechanisms, namely web platforms, social media (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Twitter) and mobile phone technology amongst youth in Kosovo and of the increased acknowledgement that such citizen-oriented tools can ensure better public outreach and transparency.
- To ensure cost-effective project interventions and considerable return on investment, SAEK has been designed based on lessons learned and tested practices that have led to significant benefits in similar political and socio-economic contexts such as the ones in Kosovo.
- A thorough needs assessment was performed with the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Agency (KAA) and relevant judicial bodies to ensure that relevant needs and requirements are properly addressed. SAEK is also based on current government strategies and action plans as well as up-to-date progress reports formulated by international organizations and institutions, including UN agencies and EU, as well as community service organisations.

Resources used:

- EUR 2 160 000
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Partnerships

Internews Kosovo & Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Private sector

In partnership with InternewsKosovo and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), UNDP has developed a web-platform "www.kallxo.com" which allows Kosovo citizens to report corruption in real time through multiple channels, including social media, SMS and the web. By visualizing and mapping reported corruption cases on the internet, the project aims to attract citizens' participation and raise awareness on the level and form of corruption occurring in Kosovo.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Political buy-in is integral. On 11 January 2012, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, the government adopted the Strategy and Action Plan against Corruption for 2012-2016, reasserting that combating corruption is one of the main priorities for the Kosovo Government and all its institutions.
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Conditions for success

- Government buy-in to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-driven programme.
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Other information

The project will continuously seek to ensure that the Kosovo government contributes to the project, financially or through in-kind contributions, to demonstrate clear commitment and ownership of the authorities in the process and not give the impression that SAEK is a donor-driven intervention.

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